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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3845th meeting of the Security Council, held on 23 December 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Somalia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the situation in Somalia, including the recent developments in the political, military and humanitarian fields.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the crisis in Somalia, bearing in mind respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, it stresses that the responsibility for achieving genuine national reconciliation and peace rests with the Somali people themselves.

"The Security Council expresses its full support for the efforts of regional and other interested States as well as those of international and regional organizations, particularly the Organization of African Unity, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States, the European Union, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to promote a direct political dialogue and facilitate the emergence of a broad-based central Government in Somalia.

"The Security Council welcomes the outcome of meetings between the Somali leaders held in Cairo concluded on 22 December 1997, in particular their decision to adopt a federal system with regional autonomy and their agreement to form a transitional government of national unity and to hold an inclusive conference of national reconciliation in Baidoa through which a presidential council and a Prime Minister will be elected. It also welcomes the signing of the Cairo Declaration on Somalia (S/1997/1000, annex) and other important agreements attached thereto, particularly on the creation of an elected Constituent Assembly, the establishment of an independent judicial system and the preparation of a transitional charter. The Security Council calls upon all Somali leaders to contribute positively to the current momentum for peace and reconciliation created by the

significant progress achieved in Cairo, and by the other previous initiatives of Sodere, Nairobi and Sanaa, through the widest possible participation in the planned conference and to cease immediately all acts of violence and to observe the ceasefire.

"The Security Council urges all States to contribute generously to the appeals of the United Nations to ensure continued relief and rehabilitation efforts in all regions of Somalia, including those aimed at the strengthening of civil society. It also stresses the urgent need to address the humanitarian situation in those areas affected by the recent floods.

"The Security Council reiterates its call upon all States to fulfil their obligations to implement the embargo imposed by resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992 on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia. In this context, it calls upon all States to refrain from any actions which might exacerbate the situation in Somalia.

"The Security Council expresses also its support for the efforts exerted by the Secretary-General aimed at exploring means for the United Nations to assist in restoring peace and stability in Somalia. It notes with appreciation the decision of the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) in Nairobi. In this regard, it stresses the need for closer coordination of all efforts for peace in Somalia.

"The Security Council expresses again its appreciation to all United Nations agencies, other organizations and individuals carrying out humanitarian activities in all regions of Somalia. It calls upon the Somali factions to ensure the safety and freedom of movement of all humanitarian personnel and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief, including through the immediate reopening of the airport and seaport of Mogadishu.

"The Security Council encourages the Secretary-General to continue his consultations with the Somali parties, interested and regional States and organizations concerned on means for the United Nations to support peace and reconciliation efforts, including through specific options contained in his report of 17 February 1997 (S/1997/135). It requests the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed and submit a report about these consultations and developments in the situation in due course.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."